CHAPTER 4

'Montage, My Fine Care': Realism, Surrealism and Postmodernism after Bazin

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Over the past fifty years, André Bazin's conception of cinematic realism has withstood wave upon wave of theoretical reappraisal and ideological reappropriation or reframing, only to resurface once again at the centre of debates following the advent of digital cinema and the transition to the new modes of production and consumption associated with DVD and 3D technology. It is perhaps time Bazin's contribution to postmodern theories of the image was considered both in terms of its legacy, as reflected in Barthes's and Deleuze's reconceptualisations of the photographic and cinematic language, and in relation to its contemporary, decisive role in shaping the aesthetics and filming practice of the French new wave. Few will doubt that the reception of Bazin's work in the 1980s, though eclipsed by the rise of anti-realist theories, owed much to the legitimacy which film art had gained as a result of his careful philosophical and critical staging of the confrontation between Hollywood, classic French cinema and Italian neorealism during the 1940s and 1950s. Whether, in this context, the new wave can be said to have fulfilled the aspirations of Bazin's film aesthetics, and may have even facilitated, in some cases, their rehabilitation in the postmodern (and 'post-realist') age, needs to be set against the often obscured, yet crucial interaction between Bazinian cinematic realism and avant-garde movements, such as surrealism. Given the unique place that the *Cahiers du cinéma* founder occupies at the crossroads between different schools and generations of film-makers, no accurate account of the postmodern relevance of Bazin's reflections on the ontology of the photographic image or the evolution of film language can ignore the critic's exchanges with at least two prominent representatives of French experimental cinema: Jean-Luc Godard and Luis Buñuel. The extent to which, in both cases, Bazin's insistence on Renoir opens up, rather than precludes, the possibility of dialogue and provides a paradoxical middle ground where the new wave picks up and reaffirms the surrealist disavowal of impressionist cinema, brings out the

contemporary resonance of the fundamental issues which any in-depth exploration of the realism of cinematic images is bound to raise. Should one oppose the inherent, 'natural' realism of cinematic images (as indexical replicas of real objects in the world) and the 'artifice' of montage? Should film-makers discard the depiction of immaterial, invisible phenomena of the mind for the sake of cinematic realism? What is the ontological and temporal status of the 'realist' images of objects and beings in the world? These questions have continued to haunt theorists and practitioners of photography and film (from Metz to Barthes and Deleuze, from Godard to Fellini and Lynch) long after Bazin's untimely death in 1958.

Though the aspiring film-maker on whom Bazin's personality and conception of cinema left a lasting impression during the formative years of the new wave was Truffaut, as opposed to Godard, who professed a certain independence of thought in his articles at the time, one can say that *À bout de souffle*, hailed as the manifesto of the new movement on its release in 1960, paid homage to the father of cinematic realism in ways that were no less overt to discerning viewers than the dedication which prefaced Truffaut's debut feature, *Les quatre cents coups/The Four Hundred Blows*, the previous year at the Cannes festival. It is not simply a question of recalling yet again Godard's provocative use of the documentary style of filming which Bazin had tied in with Italian neorealism and with the absence of montage and rule of the unity of space (exemplified with reference to Flaherty as well as Lamorisse, for the French tradition). Alongside the emphasis on outdoor and location shooting, with a hand-held camera and a reduced crew, which combined with the occasional extract from newsreel footage (such as President Eisenhower's visit to Paris in 1959) to give a distinct historical realism to the characters and events in Godard's film, Godard also engaged with Bazin's auteurist reappraisal of American cinema and the critic's endorsement of Renoir's directorial style as the pinnacle of French realism through a range of subtle, yet salient, metadiegetic cues. Not only are the two protagonists in *À bout de souffle*, Patricia (Jean Seberg) and Michel (Jean-Paul Belmondo) representative of opposed sets of cultural conventions in narrative terms but the very presence of the actors on the screen (in particular, Seberg's, whose star status in France owed much to the leading role she played in Otto Preminger's adaptation of Françoise Sagan's novel, *Bonjour Tristesse* – 1958) offered Godard the springboard for an intricate web of cross references, indicative in themselves of the directorial choices and statements that made up the ingrained manifesto of the new wave. When, after the premiere of *À bout de souffle*, Godard argued that his film was 'really a documentary on Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo' (Godard 1990: 166), he referred not only to Raoul Coutard's filming technique (as that of an experienced war photographer and newsreel cameraman), but also to the confrontation between opposing styles of acting and cinematic traditions.

The allusion to Jean Renoir's *mise en scène* in the hotel sequence (when Patricia seeks Michel's approval as she compares herself to the girl in a poster reproduction of a painting by Renoir's father, the impressionist painter Pierre-August Renoir), occurs in the middle of a long sequence of references to American film noir and other classic Hollywood genre films (in particular, westerns and thrillers), punctuated by the cameo appearance of Jean-Pierre Melville, author of popular French gangster films in the 1950s (*Bob le flambeur*, 1955 and *Deux hommes à Manhattan*, 1958). A range of iconic Hollywood productions of the period are similarly brought to the audience's attention in *À bout de souffle* as Belmondo's character impersonates Humphrey Bogart in *The Harder They Fall* (1956), repeatedly using his trademark lip-wiping gesture (which Patricia replicates in the final shot of the film) as he walks past a poster advertising Robert Aldrich's *Ten Seconds to Hell* (1959), and is seen coming out of a cinema where Budd Boetticher's *Westbound* (1959) was playing. Jean Seberg's character, in turn, slips in and out of a cinema where Otto Preminger's *Whirlpool* is playing in order to elude the police surveillance that she is subject to. Indeed, Godard could just as well have said that his film was a documentary about the generation of young cinephiles coming of age during Bazin's editorship of *Cahiers du cinéma* ; *À bout de souffle* is replete with references to the new wave obsession with American cinema, and boasts an in-depth knowledge of Hollywood cinematic codes and directorial styles. At the same time, Godard's debut feature implicitly points to the emerging confrontation between the established production system and the post-war national schools of film-making gathered under the banner of Italian neorealism.

If Godard engages with Bazin's aesthetic conception and rejection of montage (not only through the provocative use of jump cuts but also through the less conspicuous lack of editing in the hotel sequence, for which he seems to privilege the long take), he does so from the standpoint of a film critic turned film director who is fully aware of the position his generation occupies in the history of cinema, and, moreover, wants to make his audience aware that the 'Young Turks' are about to change 'the rules of the game': 'We were the first cinéastes to know that Griffith exists. Even Carné, Delluc, or René Clair, when they made their first films, had no true critical or historical background.' (Godard 1972k: 172) Thanks to Godard, and his uninhibited use of filmic quotations and stylistic fireworks, film suddenly seemed to skip the stage of a fumbling technique in search of an aesthetic, and acquired the status of self-reflexive art, capable of commenting on its own making, the evolution of its language and the controversial issue of cinematic realism as related to *mise en scène* and montage.

Godard's critical response to the articles which Bazin published in *Cahiers du cinéma* on montage in the 1950s (in particular, 'The Evolution of Cinematographic Language' and '*Montage interdit*'),[1] can be said to underlie all

his film reviews and essays from the time, although this comes through most forcefully in three of his early writings. The first, published in the *Gazette du cinéma* (3/1950), bears the misleading title 'Towards a Political Cinema', because it advocates no definite political stance but seems rather to extol the expressive virtues of montage and the ability of the cinematic image to transcend time through the repetition of a fleeting instant which achieves the symbolic value of eternity:

> The village fleeing before the invader, the arrival of the Germans, shown in a single shot with fantastic virtuosity, the death of the young people, intensified in effect by repeating the same camera movement five times. These moments are brief, but their very swiftness is a sign of eternity [*suggère l'éternel*]. (Milne 1972: 16–17)[2]

Soviet productions as well as notorious examples of Nazi propaganda films are mentioned in the course of a typically ambivalent argument, which foreshadows Godard's taste for provocation, his political films made after *À bout de souffle* (*Le petit soldat* – 1961 and *Les carabiniers* – 1962, the latter featuring the repetition of the same camera movement in the execution of the partisan girl); and, ultimately, his ongoing polemic with Bazin, as he recalled it in an interview with Alain Bergala, in 1985:

> I have always had, through my education, the spirit of contradiction. I said to myself: they are sharp-tongued, but couldn't one say the opposite? Bazin was saying: sequence-shot, and I was asking myself whether continuity editing was not good, after all. (Bergala 1985: 10)[3]

This statement aptly captures Godard's stand in his two other articles on editing in relation to *mise en scène*: 'Defense and Illustration of Classical Construction'/*Défense et illustration du découpage classique*, and 'Montage, My Fine Care'/*Montage, mon beau souci*, which were published in *Cahiers du cinéma* in September 1952 and December 1956, respectively. Bazin had argued, for instance, that Welles's montage, unlike that of the early avant-garde film-makers of the 1920s, 'is not trying to deceive us; it offers us a contrast, condensing time, and hence is the equivalent for example of the French imperfect or of the English frequentative tense' (Bazin 2005a: 36). Contrary to Bazin's indictment of German expressionism and the use of optical effects and montage otherwise than to enhance the inherently realist vocation of narrative cinema, Godard argued that American comedy, as a genre, owed less to Mack Sennett slapstick than it owed to German expressionism, given that 'Expressionism had made the eye the moral focus for feeling' (Godard 1972a: 27). He then goes on to defend Otto Preminger's use of shot and reverse shot,

and his predilection for 'medium rather than long shots' which revealed 'the desire to reduce the drama to the immobility of the face' (28). Whereas Bazin praised Italian neorealism for 'its stripping away of all expressionism' and, in particular, in the 'total absence of the effects of montage' (Bazin 2005a: 37), Godard endorsed the heightened realism of the close-up, despite 'the spatial discontinuity occasioned by shot changes which certain devotees of the "ten-minute take" make a point of despising' (Godard 1972a: 29).

The quintessential scene in *À bout de souffle*, as far as Godard's polemical engagement with Bazin is concerned, occurs in the second half of the film, when Patricia and Michel go to see a Western to escape the police and wait until nightfall. It is only when they leave the cinema that a long shot reveals what was playing: Budd Boetticher's *Westbound* (1959). Beyond the historical realism of the cinephile reference to the contemporary French release of an American film, the whole scene is an elaborate allusion to Bazin's articles on the Western, the latest of which, published in 1957 in *Cahiers du cinéma*, was devoted to Budd Boetticher, and was entitled 'An Exemplary Western: *Seven Men From Now*' (Bazin 1985: 242–7). In his 1953 article, 'The Western or the American Film *par excellence*', Bazin traced back the origins of the genre to 'the encounter between a mythology and a means of expression' (Bazin 2005b: 142), and signalled the correspondence between the character of the hero and the style of *mise en scène*, which explains the virtual absence of close-ups, and the pronounced predilection for travelling and panning shots 'which refuse to be limited by the frameline and which restore to space its fullness' (147). Unlike the aural quotation from Otto Preminger's *Whirlpool*, the scene filmed inside the cinema where Boetticher's Western is supposed to be playing hinges on one of the most intriguing instances of sound-image asynchrony in cinema history, relying entirely on the extreme close-up of Michel and Patricia kissing as their profiles are lit up by the flickering light coming from the screen and the following implausible version of the dialogue of the film in progress (dubbed in French and recited in monotonous, incantatory manner) is heard on the soundtrack:

MAN'S VOICE (*off*): Beware, Jessica,
The beveled edge of kisses.
The years pass by too swiftly.
Shun, shun the memories that hurt.
WOMAN'S VOICE (*off*): You're wrong, sheriff . . .
Our story is noble and tragic
Like the mask of a tyrant.
A drama neither perilous nor magic.
No cold detail
Can turn our love pathetic (Andrew 1990: 122).

The compelling framing of the scene (with its assumed mirror image of a situation portrayed on the screen) is visually in jarring contrast to Bazin's argument about the stylistic specificity of the Western or the 'American film *par excellence*', predicated on the virtual absence of close-ups.

Added to this layer of filmic intertextuality, however, there is a different type of confrontation between Hollywood and the new French cinema going on at the level of soundtrack where a short aural quotation is followed by an incongruous dubbed dialogue made up of extracts from love poems by two surrealist writers: Aragon's 'Elsa je t'aime' and Apollinaire's 'Cors de chasse'. This lyrical interlude is loosely connected with the expected Western story through the addition of short introductory lines, meant to identify the off-screen characters as Jessica and the sheriff (neither of whom, needless to say, appears in Boetticher's film). More than the question of a distinctly postmodern collision between 'low and high culture' (Martin 2004: 262), what strikes the cinephile viewer in this case is Godard's carefully constructed opposition between two cinematic traditions, and the manner in which surrealism is used as shorthand for the French '*politique des auteurs*' in contrast to established Hollywood genre conventions. A pastiche of the American film noir (and of Bogart's recognisable screen persona), *À bout de souffle* also engages, in parodic mode, with the assumed 'exemplarity' of the Western, its 'faithfulness to history' (*sa vérité historique*) and the realism of its *mise en scène* (Bazin 2005b: 142). If Bazin emphatically stated in the opening lines of his 1957 article on Budd Boetticher, entitled 'An Exemplary Western: *Seven Men From Now*', that 'We have here the opportunity of applying what we have said about the *politique des auteurs*' (Bazin 1985: 241), it was a different understanding of the new aesthetic and stylistic conception (based on the competing practices of the Hollywood studio system and the neorealist inspired French new wave) that Godard would reclaim and defend. Whereas Bazin invariably praised the realistic credentials of directorial styles which privileged the use of depth of field over editing (whether this happened to apply to Orson Welles, Jean Renoir or Visconti), from 1959 Godard embarked on a quest for the specificity of the French *authorial* approach to film-making which was to crystallise into the manifesto of the *Nouvelle Vague* – neither a slavish imitation of Hollywood nor a perfunctory rehearsal of neorealist techniques to mark the break with the Hollywood tradition:

> Because even when it is badly composed, badly shot, badly edited, one feels, one senses that there is an artist behind the French camera; whereas even when it is well composed, well shot, well edited, behind the foreign cameras one senses, one feels that there are only craftsmen. (Godard 1972b: 111)

It is worth recalling here that, when Godard greeted the news of Truffaut's success as the director chosen to represent France at the Cannes Film Festival in 1959, he did so under the banner of 'those [. . .] who waged, in homage to Louis Delluc, Roger Leenhardt and André Bazin the battle for the film auteur' (Godard 1972j: 147). The yardstick, however, of the artistic legitimacy that Hollywood film-makers were supposed to have achieved, thanks to the '*politique des auteurs*', appears in the shape of a reference to Aragon (rather than to the more respectable French realist tradition of the novel): 'We won the day in having it acknowledged in principle that a film by Hitchcock, for example, is as important as a book by Aragon. Film auteurs, thanks to us, have finally entered the history of art.' (147) Surprisingly, Godard's template for the new style of filming and the French *politique des auteurs* does not seek support in either Renoir's or Rossellini's *mise en scène* but in the aesthetics of the surrealist avant-garde (whether in the guise of its poetic revolution of language, illustrated by Aragon, or in respect of its ingenious use of montage, Bazin's protestations notwithstanding).

Surrealism crops up at regular intervals in Godard's articles from the 1950s, and perhaps nowhere more saliently than in his review of the 1959 Short Film Festival in Tours which mixes an approving nod to Bazin's notion of 'impure cinema' (in defence of screen adaptations) with a discussion of the specificity of the new school of 'French short film-making' (under the heading '*Vive la France*') and an enthusiastic review of Jacques Rozier's *Blue Jeans*, leading up to the quotation of the same quatrain from Aragon's love poem, *Elsa, je t'aime*, which Godard deliberately inserted and ended up reading on the soundtrack of *À bout de souffle* several months later. The common denominator of Godard's incursions into Bazin's critical territory from a surrealist angle resided in his passionate interest in documentaries and the nature of the reality captured on camera not only by the early pioneers of the medium, such as the Lumières, but also by contemporary anthropologists and amateur ethnographic film-makers, such as Jean Rouch, who left a deeper mark on the evolution of the new wave than one may first be inclined to think. If Godard admired Rouch's keen eye for the composition within the shot, in a 'search for the Holy Grail called *mise en scène*' (Godard 1972c: 129), this was because he knew Rouch's style did not derive from a conscious aesthetic decision but emerged in response to the constraints of the medium and of the amateur tools he had at his disposal: a hand-held camera, no direct-sound recording equipment, and, above all, the very short – 20 seconds – reel of film which accounted for the lack of montage, the fluidity of the shot and the unity of space achieved. What Rouch and the surrealists (epitomised by the recurrent references to Aragon, Franju, and later to Buñuel) brought to the new generation of film-makers, according to Godard, was a refreshing return to the origins of cinema, to the truthfulness of the unskilled or spontaneous recording of reality, to the early

days of montage and the advent of sound, when each optical or sound effect still had the ability to disconcert the viewer, and reveal the unknown, or the disquieting side of everyday occurrences:

> In all of Franju's documentaries, even the least successful of them, a flash of madness suddenly rips the screen and forces the spectator to look at reality in another light. In *La Tête contre les murs* (1959) [. . .], this flash, this poetic illumination, has become the theme of the film. [. . .] In more modern terms, let us say that Franju demonstrates the necessity of Surrealism if one considers it as a pilgrimage to the sources. (Godard 1972j: 129–30)

The return to the origins of cinema ranked high among Godard's privileged markers of a break with tradition, which echoed his appreciation of the early Dada and surrealist dismantling of established literary codes and classical writing (most often evidenced in his references to Aragon or to *Ballet mécanique* (Fernand Léger, Dudley Murphy, 1924) (Godard 1972c: 54). In one of his retrospective interviews, he interestingly tied in his use of 'amateur' techniques in *À bout de souffle* with his understanding of the inherent realism of cinema, which happened to coincide not only with Bazin's conception (based on the indexical nature of the medium) but also with the surrealist notion of photography as 'genuine photography of thought' (Breton 1998: 245):

> I think that cinematographers [. . .] think their eyes look *out* at a moving reality that's coming *in*, but they don't consider that maybe there's a kind of invisible camera with an eye *out there* and with the printing *in here*. [. . .] Most cinematographers are bad soldiers who don't know what they are fighting for, whether they want the enemy to come in or go out. . . .] That is why I brought 'amateur' techniques to movies. In *Breathless*, I used the same techniques of *Life* reporters who, at that time, had nothing to do with Hollywood. I also used underexposed pictures, which were considered awful. (Godard 1998: 98)

The extent to which surrealism, alongside the new documentary tradition (illustrated by young film-makers of the 1950s such as Agnès Varda, Jacques Rosier and Alain Resnais), becomes the template of French neorealism, and of Godard's own interpretation of the *politique des auteurs*, as opposed to what he calls the *politique des metteurs en scène* (Godard 1972c: 79), can best be measured when considering the paraphrase of Breton's memorable ending of *Nadja* (1928) which provides the peremptory conclusion of Godard's review of the Tours Short Film Festival: 'Henceforth, the beauty of any short film must be that of these four (Varda's *Du côté de la côte*, Demy's *Le Bel indifferent*, Rozier's *Blue*

Jeans and Resnais' *Le Chant du Styrène*), or no beauty at all' (Godard 1972e: 116). 'To make a short film today is in a way to return to the cinema's beginnings' (112), Godard further remarked, and, in the same way in which he defended the use of montage by the new generation of documentary film-makers, he constantly sought to validate the enhanced realism derived from Eisenstein's revolutionary use of the 'montage by attraction' or optical effects, which came up in the early Dada and surrealist films, as well as in certain otherwise thoroughly plausible scenes from Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (1956) (Godard 1972c: 54). Godard's conspicuous references to Buñuel in his later militant productions, such as *Weekend* (1967) and *Prénom Carmen/First Name: Carmen* (1983), further highlight the new wave director's belief in the indissoluble link between social realism and its cinematic expression in a revolutionary syntax of film. The enigmatic hitch-hiker in *Weekend*, identified by means of a recurrent screen caption as the 'exterminating angel' (the title of Buñuel's iconic 1962 feature), declares in typical Dada fashion: 'I am here to proclaim to these modern times the end of the grammatical era and the beginning of an age of flamboyance in every field, especially the movies'. The savage indictment of consumer society in *Weekend* thus echoes the scathing critique of the bourgeoisie in Buñuel's surrealist parable whose theatrical *mise en scène*, coupled with a striking use of repetition, prompted Deleuze's comments on the evolution of cinematographic language in the work of the surrealist film-maker, signalling the advent of the 'time-image' from within the confines of a classical, realist construction:

> *He injects the power of repetition into the cinematographic image*. In this way he is already going beyond the world of impulses, to knock on the doors of time. [. . .] He elaborates another type of sign which might be called 'scene' and which perhaps gives us a direct time-image. [. . .] But it is from inside that Buñuel goes beyond naturalism, without ever renouncing it. (Deleuze 2005: 137)

Bazin's highly appreciative remarks on Buñuel's documentary style in *Las Hurdes/Land Witmidhout Bread* (1933) and *Los olvidados/The Young and the Damned* (1950) similarly underscores the successful blend of surrealist imagery and a sociopolitical message, which is rendered all the more effective by the skilful use of montage and optical effects, despite an obvious break with the conventions of narrative cinema and psychological realism. One of the few favourable reviews of *Los olvidados* at the time of its first release in France, Bazin's article interestingly contrasts Salvador Dali's vision for the dream sequence in Hitchcock's Hollywood-produced *Spellbound* (1945), hinted at rather than explicitly designated as the worst example of Freudian surrealism, and Buñuel's subtle interweaving of continuity editing and irrational elements in the scenes referred to below involving the Pedro and Jaïbo characters:

> Buñuel achieves the tour de force of recreating two dreams in the worst tradition of Hollywood Freudian surrealism and yet leaving us palpitating with horror and pity. Pedro has run away from home because his mother refused to give him a scrap of meat which he wanted. He dreams that his mother gets up in the night to offer him a cut of raw and bleeding meat, which Jaïbo, hidden under the bed, grabs as she passes. We shall never forget that piece of meat, quivering like a dead octopus as the mother offers it with a Madonna-like smile. Nor shall we ever forget the poor, homeless, mangy dog which passes through Jaïbo's receding consciousness as he lies dying on a piece of waste ground, his forehead wreathed in blood. (Bazin 2013: 54–5)

Bazin's profound affinity with Buñuel's vision carefully distinguished between the unsatisfactory effect of iconic or pictorial elements in surrealist cinematography when used to render in too deliberate a fashion the aesthetics of Freudian ideology, on the one hand, and what he termed the 'irrefragable truth' of the psychoanalytical situations portrayed in Buñuel's early films: *Un Chien Andalou / An Andalusian Dog* (1929], *L'Age d'Or / The Golden Age* (1930] and *Los olvidados* (55). The graphic, visceral vocabulary which Bazin marshals in support of Buñuel's approach to rendering the inner reality of thought processes resonates well with the critic's insistence on the indexical, physical connection between the image and the object captured on film: 'his images have a pulsating, burning power to move us – the thick blood of the unconscious circulates in them and swamps us, as from an opened artery, with the pulse of the mind' (55).

Though the surrealist conception and practice of cinema seemed in every way opposed to Bazin's conceptualisation of cinematographic realism, the enthusiastic adoption of photography among the preferred experimental techniques in early avant-garde circles happened to arise from the same acknowledgement of the radical shift in the existing regime of visual representation inaugurated by the photographic imprint. Bazin and Breton agreed not only on the objectivity derived from the indexical nature of the new medium (the former highlighting, for instance, 'the transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction' – Bazin 2005a: 14) but also on the mechanical, non-human process involved, which made the author of *The Surrealist Manifesto* describe automatic drawing in terms of a type of transfer or decal (Breton 1988b: 325) while Bazin, in turn, hailed the realism inherent in the type of 'moulding' or 'imprinting' which photography and film pioneered (Bazin 2005a: 96–7). The paradox of the temporal 'cast' that cinema realises by 'moulding itself on the time of the object and [. . .] taking the imprint of its duration as well' (97) ties in with one of the earliest and most enduring aspirations of surrealist cinema which related to the possibility of capturing both the mere duration of

a movement in space (or what Deleuze referred to as the 'movement-image') and the expression of inner time perception. Buñuel's use of repetition in *The Exterminating Angel*, and his use of superimposition and slow motion in *Los olvidados*, fully demonstrate the potential of surrealist cinema to achieve one of the earliest expressions of the 'time-image' whose truthfulness ensues from a sustained exploration of the status of photographic images which Bazin himself defined, in relation to surrealism, as a 'hallucination which is also a fact' (16).

The return to the sources of cinema in surrealism, and in its subsequent new wave avatars, as well as in Godard's experimental and militant cinema, can thus be said to tend towards the realisation of the 'integral realism' which Bazin identified as 'the myth of total cinema'; 'a recreation of the world in its own image, an image unburdened by the freedom of interpretation of the artist or the irreversibility of time' (Bazin 2005a : 21). With the advent of digital and 3D modes of production and consumption, film language is on the threshold of a new revolution, which Bazin had foreseen, and which, paradoxically, surrealism as well as the French neorealist and new wave practitioners promised to fulfil by pledging to recapture what 'the real primitives of the cinema' had imagined. The 'complete imitation of nature', aiming, beyond mere repetition, at the recreation of the complete haptic and psychological perception of time, of processes of memory and projection into the future, freed from the constraints of linear, irreversible duration, yet firmly grounded in the corporeal experience of the viewer. If, with every new development, as Bazin remarked, film language draws nearer and nearer to its origins, then 'cinema has not been invented' (21) and every repetition and return bring it closer to the 'decisive instant' when the closed or circular movement becomes 'a repetition which not only succeeds, but recreates the model of the originary' (Deleuze 2005 : 136). In attempting to realise the myth of cinema, which has always been and will always remain tied in with the myth of its 'integral realism', the indexicality of photography and film will no doubt increasingly tend to restore the inner objects and phenomena of spatial and temporal perception, in a symptomatic return to the surrealist 'genuine photography of thought', and to its disturbingly persuasive pictures of the mind whose 'meaning (as Bazin himself argued) is not in the image, it is in the shadow of the image projected by montage onto the field of the consciousness of the spectator' (Bazin 2005a : 26).

NOTES

1. These titles refer, in each case, to a series of articles reprinted in the French edition of *What is Cinema*, in 1958. 'Montage interdit', translated as 'The Virtues and Limitations of Montage', gathers together two articles published in *Cahiers du cinéma* in 1953 and 1957, whereas 'The Evolution of Cinematographic Language' is a compilation of three articles: the earliest published in 1950, in *Cahiers du cinéma*, the second in 1952, in a volume entitled

Twenty Years of Cinema in Venice, and the last in 1955, in the magazine *L'Age nouveau* (see Bazin 1985: 49, 63).

2. I have slightly altered the translation of the last two words to render the connection between the instant and eternity in Godard's text.
3. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

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